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ABSTRACT

The symposium on Issues of Parent Involvement and Literacy marked the culmination of a collaborative project of Trinity College in Washington, D.C. and the Arlington (Virginia) Public Schools to reach out to limited-English-proficient (LEP) parents. This was accomplished by providing cultural and language information so that parents could become more knowledgeable about and involved in their children's education. The conference's participants included researchers, educators, policymakers, community workers, and community leaders. Presentations addressed these issues: past and current federal legislation and policy concerning the needs of the language-minority students' community; the forms, objectives, and effects of parent involvement in the schools; how illiteracy is addressed in the United States and what it implies for this population; materials and methods for teaching the LEP student; cross-cultural issues in parent involvement; involving LEP parents; and existing programs to promote parent involvement and literacy. (MSE)

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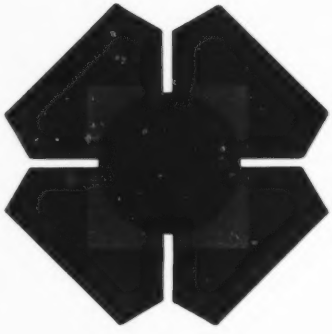
ISSUES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LITERACY



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Executive Summary of the Symposium

held at

Trinity College
Washington, DC
June 6-7, 1988

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ISSUES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LITERACY
Executive Summary

The Symposium on Issues of Parent Involvement and Literacy was sponsored by the Trinity-Arlington Teacher and Parent Training for School Success Project, a project of Academic Excellence funded by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

The conference was convened for two main purposes:

(1) To provide a forum for educators, researchers and policy makers to explore issues of parent involvement and literacy as they relate to limited-English-proficient (LEP) parents and students.

(2) To train interested educators from Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland about how to initiate and implement a successful LEP parent involvement program, modeled after the Trinity-Arlington project.

The symposium was the culmination of three years of collaboration between Trinity College, Washington, D.C. and the Arlington [Virginia] Public Schools to reach out to LEP parents by providing cultural and language information so that they could, in turn become more knowledgeable and involved in their children's education.

THE TRINITY-ARLINGTON PROJECT

One of the two primary goals of the Trinity-Arlington project was to facilitate the acquisition of certain English language skills of LEP students from four language groups enrolled in elementary, intermediate and high schools in Arlington County: Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao. Over a three-year period, the program was piloted and adapted to serve the school populations from elementary through high school. It was this last group that the program had as its specific target at the end of the project.

The second, primary goal of the project was also to involve LEP parents in the education of their children as collaborators and co-learners. The requirements were a high degree of commitment on the part of the teachers, counselors and administrators, and the identification of bilingual community liaisons who spoke the language of the four target groups and who were knowledgeable and respected in the community.

The project consisted of three components: teacher training, parent training and curriculum development. The teachers, counselors, administrators and bilingual liaisons participated in two graduate courses which dealt with parent involvement and the use of positive strategies for working with LEP parents. It was during these courses that the participants developed a Vocationally-Oriented Bilingual Curriculum (VOBC). The VOBC consists of 19 home learning lessons which, in addition to providing valuable cultural and language information to parents and students, served as a catalyst to bring parent and child together as co-learners and collaborators at home.

The results of the project confirm our original belief that the involvement of LEP parents increases their cooperation, and that

cooperation and interest has a positive effect on the children. Some of the findings from the high school program were:

- Students' proficiency in English language skills increased. Based on pre- and post tests, such as the SOLOM test, and locally developed language proficiency tests which were given to the students, proficiency increased in the areas of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. In addition, locally developed tests also indicated significant gains in paragraph writing, study skills, listening and reading.
- Students made significant gaines in understanding the impact language skills play in making career and future choices. Parents also became involved in this process. The findings were determined by a content test which was developed locally entitled the Vocationally-Oriented Bilingual Curriculum (VOBC).
- There was a greater understanding of the school system on the part of both students and parents.
- Cooperation between parent and child increased, but it increased more so between siblings where increased learning took place through the older children teaching the younger ones.
- Parents were given an opportunity to learn how to help their children with schoolwork. Because they are limited-English-proficient (LEP), and often nonliterate, they feel they cannot help their children with homework. The training groups helped them identify other ways they could be supportive of their children in school.
- Teachers who worked on the development of the VOBC or integrated the activities into their ESL instruction, felt the project had an impact on the English skills of participating students.

The success of the project and the strong support of the parents prompted Arlington County Public Schools with high concentrations of language-minority students, to institutionalize the project into the schools. The VOBC is also being integrated as a regular component of the ESL high school curriculum.

THE SYMPOSIUM

The conference brought together over 100 researchers, educators and policy makers, community workers and leaders. The agenda included two plenary and six regular sessions. The topics of the regular sessions were: From School to Work: Materials and Methods for Teaching the Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Student; Perspectives on Literacy; Cross-Cultural Issues in Parent Involvement; Involving LEP Parents; Title VII Projects of Academic Excellence: Efforts to Promote Parent Involvement and Literacy, and The Trinity-Arlington Model: Adaptation Strategies for School Districts. The latter session was a training session for educators who were interested in implementing a parent involvement program in their schools based on the the Trinity-Arlington model. Products and publications pertaining to this project are available from the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 11501 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902. Copies have also been

deposited in ERIC (Educational Resources Information System) and are available through that service either in microfiche or in hard copy.

Summaries of the papers presented at the Symposium follow. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the convenors or the official stance of any particular institution. They are being made available with the intent of furthering the discussion of involving LEP parents and their children, the students, and their teachers and administrators in the schooling process.

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The impetus and the funding for many of the activities which address the needs of the language-minority students community in schools districts across this nation comes from the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs. Carol Pendas Whitten outlined the history of Bilingual Education legislation and provided the rationale for the 1984 Amendments to the Bilingual Education Act.

The first Bilingual Education Act was enacted in 1968. It was a response to the language needs of Hispanic school children in the Southwest who were unable to achieve because of their limited English language skills, and were using Spanish to communicate. The Act was intended to help schools districts meet the special educational needs of these children.

The 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision further defined the role that school districts should play in meeting the special needs of the limited-English speaking child. By law, school districts were to provide for the LEP children in their jurisdictions. The law changed the flexibility of the 1968 legislation to a mandate that there would be only one program design and one prescribed approach--a native language approach--in working with LEP children. The directives issued by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), known as the "Lau Remedies," narrowly limited options for elementary and intermediate schools, mandating programs that relied heavily on native language instruction. Although the Lau Remedies were never formally enacted into law, OCR has, since 1975, negotiated compliance agreements with schools districts based on these remedies. Consequently, schools district have been very reluctant to make adjustments in their teaching methods in fear that they would lose their federal funds if found in violation of these remedies.

The original legislation was designed to address the teaching of homogeneous groups. Recent years have seen a change in the composition of districts with LEP children. Many of them have classes which include many different children with different language backgrounds. Some school districts have up to 70% of their population who qualify as language-minority. It has become impossible for schools to serve the each of these language groups by adhering to the rigid native language instruction requirements.

Secretary [William] Bennett is strongly committed to returning to local schools the right to determine the best method of teaching their LEP students. The Secretary is also concerned that if the new arrivals do not acquire strong English skills, they will be relegated to a life of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty.

In order to give school districts alternatives to the educational methods they must use now, Congress has provided funds for these alternative programs. However, there is a 4% cap on them and the Secretary is seeking to lift that cap so that any school district will be able to apply for funds to help its LEP students.

Pendas outlined the regulations for the implementation of the 1984 Amendment to the Bilingual Education act as having three main objectives: 1) Discretion is given the school district to determine the extent of native language instruction required in a transitional bilingual education project; 2) parental involvement in a child's bilingual education program is emphasized. The regulations call for parent participation on two advisory councils for each school district--one to assist the district in preparing the application for federal funds, the other to provide consultation to the district for the duration of the federal grant; 3) Title VII funds will be granted only when school districts provide a plan on how they will build local capacity to continue their bilingual education programs once federal funds are no longer available.

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Two decades of research show that children have an advantage in school when their parents encourage and support their school activities. Joyce Epstein outlined the research she and her colleagues have been doing in looking at the techniques teachers use in involving parents in their children's education.

The major types of parent involvement fall within five categories:

1) Basic obligations of parents which include providing for basic needs--food, clothing shelter, health and safety. The schools build on those obligations by providing information, advice, and sometimes publications, on homework, discipline, use of community resources, etc.

2) School to home communications happen when the school performs its obligation to informing parents about school programs and their children's progress, and parents are expected to act on this information. The methods of providing this information vary, but there is reason to believe that many parents never get the opportunity to act because they either do not receive the information, or the conditions under which they could respond are not adequate.

3) Parents get involved at the school. This may be in the form of volunteering in the classroom or elsewhere on the campus, and/or attending performances, assemblies, demonstrations and sports events. Or they attend training sessions, workshops and visit the school as observers.

4) Parents assist with learning activities at home. This activity is by far the most difficult because it requires coordination and leadership by the teacher. Teachers most commonly stress reading and the use of books. Principals support the use of this learning technique through providing space and encouragement of workshops, etc. Parents normally get involved with learning through helping with homework.

The effects of teacher practices on parent involvement gives parents a much clearer idea about the amount of work it takes to provide instruction to their children. They also draw on ideas from the teacher for use at home, and they tend to become supportive of the teacher. Students also benefit from this teacher-parent relationship as is evident from their performance in the classroom. The biggest benefit appears to be that parents learn <u>how</u> to help their children.

5) Parents get involved in PTA/PTO groups or other organizations, school committees, etc., at the school, district, or state level. These governing and/or decision-making bodies can act as advocates for the children, help formulate or revise school policies, help select new

principals, teachers or staff, or participate in federally- or state-funded programs.

Parents can also get involved in advocacy groups which are generally concerned with maintaining and improving the quality of schools. They function as independent bodies, but are often involved in cooperative efforts with schools for school improvement.

When applied to LEP parents, these five categories suggest three requirements from school districts: 1) Awareness of English proficiency among parents of the students; 2) commitment to solving the problems of involving all parents, including developing comprehensive programs of all types of parent involvement, and 3) action to extend opportunities for all or most parents to become involved in one or more types of parent involvement, especially in ways that will assist the daily success of their own children in school. When effectively applied, school and family connections may, in the long term, be a powerful force for assuring the full membership of new immigrant children in American society.

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How the problem of illiteracy is addressed in this country has been a matter of concern to the education profession, to parents, researchers and to policy makers. The 1982 Census Bureau English language proficiency survey commissioned by the Department of Education suggested that between 17 and 21 million adults are illiterate which aproximately is 13% of the population. Thirty seven percent of those illiterates don't speak English at home. Of those, 82% were born outside the U.S., 21% entered the country within the previous six years and 42% are living in neighborhoods where a language other than Enlgish is predominant.

A second report which appeared in *Education Week* [May 14, 1986] on the school population in the U.S., indicates that in the 1986-87 school year, 3.6 million children will enter school. One out of four will be at poverty-level, 15% will be immigrants who speak a language other than English and 10% will have parents who are illiterate or lack previous education.

Currently, about 21% of the school population is Black, Hispanic and Asian. In the year 2000, these groups will be about 1/3 of the U.S. population. Half a million immigrants come to the U.S. every year and it is estimated that another 1/2 million come as undocumented aliens. Forty percent of the legal immigrants come from Asia, 40% from Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Of the undocumented aliens, 50% come from Mexico and 25% from Central and South American countries.

Birthrates also are contributing to the growing ethnic diversity of this country. White American women currently have a much lower birthrate than language-minority populations. White America is getting older, while minority America is young: the average age of the White American is 31; the Black 25; and the Hispanic 23.

Sixty-four percent of the LEP population speaks Spanish. One out of four speaks English not well or not at all.

Other groups which needs to be recognized are the Asian communities. Their reputation is that they do well. Bliss reminded the audience that among them also were signifcant numbers who were preliterate and nonliterate, and who had had no formal schooling.

The Hispanic and Asian communities make up approximately 3/4 of the nation's LEP population. Others--Haitian, Afghans, Ethiopians, East Europeans make up the rest, and their needs can be as great. Nevertheless they need to be incorporated into our society and in so doing must learn English and also become literate.

There are two major myths that cloud the discussions of literacy. They create unrealistic expectations, and lead to solutions that don't work. First, the need to produce better and more capable students. A commendable approach, but the problem of high dropout rates, especially in the areas where there are language-minority populations is still not being addressed. School reform policies are not designed to deal with this population.

The second myth is that in a technological age, we need new higher levels of literacy. Bliss against pointed out that the largest number of new jobs that are being created are not necessarily ones which demand high literacy skills--janitors, waitresses, sales clerks, cashiers, office clerk, food preparation, etc. If there were an economic imperative to produce more literates then the funds to train them would become available.

If then, there are no real economic reasons to deal with illiteracy, then why deal with it? The reason is one of social imperative which is of greater urgency. Unless this issue is addressed, Bliss stated, we are creating a two-tiered society--the literates haves and the illiterate have-nots.

Seven principles were suggested for consideration in the endeavor to enhance parent involvement in the education of their children.

1. Schools should have realistic expectations, and should be cognizant that when asking for help, parents may be limited in what they can actually provide.

2. Family problems which arise when children acculturate more quickly than the adults. Parental authority often disintegrates in the face of this process, which often leads to discipline and abuse problems.

3. Schools should not be discouraged when parents don't participate in their children's education. They should continue to seek ways which will allow the parents to become involved in the school.

4. The education system should be part of a larger array of support systems and services, such as day care, medical care, employment services, etc. There is a good chance that if the survival aspects of family life are taken care of, then the parents will be able to consider becoming more involved in the education of their children.

5. Schools should recognize that there is a key distinction among limited-English school populations--those who were born here and those who have immigrated. Those with the legacy of coming from a society where they were of the majority culture have a different perspective and legacy than those who were born into a minority culture. Newcomers come with higher expectations.

6. High school reform comes too late. The focus of reform should be a the junior high/middle school level.

7. Partnership with the private sector is a necessary component of the education of children. Part-time jobs should be integrated with

school instruction and guidance about the world of work and career planning.

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From School to Work: Materials and Methods for Teaching the Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Student

In recent years, schools and programs have had to deal with a changing LEP student population, both at the high school and the adult level. There are now significant numbers of nonliterate students at all grade levels and in adult education classes. They are also in the elementary schools.

The demands of school to work have also changed significantly. The fact remains that a) the transition from school to work must be quick and efficient, and b) it is very difficult for those who speak little or no English to find sustained work.

The presentations in this session addressed these two issues. The examples were drawn from Fairfax County, Virginia, Salem, Oregon and the U.S. Army. Three papers dealt with the lack of materials which met the needs of this special population. Most materials for nonliterates tend to assume common, or shared, information. Research on reading and writing that stresses the importance of meaning in reading and writing activities. Thus the necessity to provide pre-reading activities, or ways to reinforce what the student already knows or should know is of primary importance. It was suggested that bilingual programs recognize this knowledge as the basis for teaching a child to read first in his or her home language.

When transferred to adults, becoming literate in one's mother tongue is not the concern of the programs designed to teach literacy and/or English as a Second Language. Hence the demands of creating a meaningful environment in the classroom, and supplementing the activities within that classroom with materials that are "real world" oriented should be the major focus of the programs which provide these services. In other words, these programs must find ways to teach their nonliterate students skills which will enable them to move into the world of work and remain in it.

Materials can be developed to help with the development and strengthening of skills. Examples of materials were presented or described from Fairfax County and Salem, Oregon. and it was suggested that programs can be tailored to provide the necessary training to facilitate the transition from school to work.

One of the largest organizations which teaches basic skills in the U.S. is the Army. In order to take full advantage of the opportunities the Army provides, an enlisted person also should have the necessary literacy skills. Army testing procedures eliminate the illiterate because that person would not be able to score high enough on the tests to be eligible for training. Low literacy or limited-English proficiency also have a potential negative effect for the person already in the Army. Although studies are not conclusive, it does appear that the LEP Army population has a fair amount of trouble in the organization. Efforts to meet the needs of this group have not been entirely successful.

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Perspectives on Literacy: Cross-Cultural Issues in Parent Involvement

Involving parents in the education of their children is a complex process. This session focused on the goals and/or purposes that are instrumental in providing an environment where literacy can take place.

Literacy is an intergenerational issue. Adults who learn to read (and write) change in the way they view themselves, and their children also begin to view them differently. Both generations then become participants in a literate society.

The presentations from this session included three examples of programs which have a literacy component for the adult LEP individual. The fourth presentation provided guidelines which can be used as the basis for an adult ESL literacy program that cuts across generations.

ESL programs provide an invaluable service. The suggestion was, however, that they are not designed to address the role language plays in the community as a whole. There is often little in a structured classroom situation which allows for the complementary goals of language learning and friendship to be realized. Older refugees, for example, are ignored while their adult children are trained for employment. They are isolated and their language problems further contribute to their inability to access health and social services. Contact with a young, English-speaking tutor (or friend) can provide for an opportunity for the older person to begin coping with the language skills necessary to make him/her more self-sufficient.

LEP children are also in need of help and would greatly benefit from the experience of an older English-speaking person who could introduce them to the schooling process and help them adjust. This is particularly helpful when the parents are ill-equipped to help their children in this process.

One such project is *Project LEIF, Learning English through Intergenerational Friendship*, in Philadelphia. This project uses individual tutors as well as classroom instruction across intergenerational and cultural lines. Evaluation data indicate that a lot of learning takes place when the proper care is given in recruiting, training, providing ESL services and sponsoring multicultural events.

There is consensus in the education community that native language literacy (NLL) is the preferable way to teach literacy. When a person is literate in his own language, learning to read a second language is an easier task. Often, however, NLL is considered a luxury, and as indicated in the session on School to Work, the pressure of providing English language skills precludes NLL in this country.

In the refugee camps of Bataan, the Philippines, Phanat Nikhom, Thailand, and Galang, Indonesia, classes and training programs have been designed for refugees bound for the U.S. The main goal is to give them a headstart on resettlement. Although the training includes many more components than traditional literacy activities, much is done to prepare the students to cope with the written word which bombards one's senses in any American city or town.

For those with some English language skills, the training includes classes in ESL, Cultural Orientation, and Work Orientation. Over a 20-week period, reading takes the form of manuals and forms at work, job and career information, instructions for medicines and household

mixtures, the ins and outs of resettlement and general information about the U.S.

For those who possess little or no literacy in either their own language or in English, each camp has devised its own program with specific objectives based on the needs of the ethnic groups in the camp. All provide NLL, but one provides it all through the 20 weeks because it serves the hilltribes of Laos who only recently acquired alphabets. In this case, often English language literacy is one of learning to read rather than reading to learn. In Bataan, NLL is used only to get the students to begin interacting with English, whereas the program in Galang uses a mixture of both methods.

The mandate of schools when it comes to serving their LEP populations, is to use native language literacy as a means to acquire English language skills. In recent years, the school have been forced to provide more than an education to the children who have appeared at their doors. They now provide social forms of assistance. The need to provide this assistance often results from the inability of the adults in the household to read. For schools to help at this level is very difficult to do, particularly when the LEP population represents a large number of countries. One such example is the District of Columbia Public Schools which uses its limited resources in providing training through a bilingual school in Spanish and English; a special program for nonliterates or those severally academically delayed where instruction in science and social studies is in Spanish; computer-based training for bilingual teachers and parents; and an ESL pull-out program which varies depending on the literacy or language needs of the students and the language ability of the teacher.

The two models of teaching literacy skills--the decoding model, and the whole language model--are used in programs based on the perspective and perceived needs of the people providing the service and those receiving it. Many of those in literacy and ESL training programs are parents. Clearly, continued rethinking through literacy training programs for the print-deprived or nonliterate parent as well as for prospective teachers of these parents, should be an ongoing activity. A primary concern of that process is to recognize that literacy activities continue at home, and to develop meaningful activities for use between parent and child. Such an approach may mean the beginning of the whole language model which is the preferable of the two models.

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Cross-Cultural Issues in Parent Involvement

Two main issues appear to be connected with the involvement of parents in their children's schools: 1) Who makes the decisions and 2) who maintains the power to effect policy as it relates to the education of children.

The schools have generally had the upper hand. Simply put, parents have had little or no decision-making power. The final decisions on how schools are run, and what form of teaching will take place within classrooms belongs to the administrators and the teachers. Even when the schools are forced to comply with certain rulings, they ultimately take over the decision-making process regarding the day-to-day operations of their institutions. Language-minority parents in particular, are at a disadvantage because of their lack of English-

language skills, lack of knowledge about the system, and lack of resources such as transportation.

There is, however, general agreement that involving the LEP parent in the school process produces good results. No one model emerges as the one to follow, and schools have used a variety of programs such a those listed below, to enhance cross-cultural communication, the ultimate aim being to assimilate the children into U.S. society in a constructive way. That, of course, also means a reasonably high degree of literacy.

1. A curriculum is created which has a close link to community and language patterns.

2. Parents are used as aides in bilingual programs. Many of them continue their education and become professional educators themselves.

3. Parent Advisory Councils provide opportunities for language-minority parents to assume leadership positions.

4. Parent education programs provide opportunities for many to receive a formal education. Also these same programs often include skill building through curricular materials designed for parents to work with their children and learn together at home. Parents become active participants in the education process.

5. Language-majority and language-minority parents are integrated where they are involved on an equal basis. This is probably the most difficult process. It does, however appear to work in two-way and immersion bilingual schools.

Two models, such as those described above which address the problem of cross-cultural issues were presented as part of this session. The Interagency Family English Literacy Program (IFEL) is designed to address the education needs of the head of household which in this case is often a single female or displaced homemaker and mother of LEP children. Other literate homemakers of the same cultural background are identified and trained, who then work with the nonliterate person. This program is based on an intercultural principle as well as a cross-cultural one. It aims to provide role models to encourage potential success, combat defeatism and involve the community in language development. The latter is important because when tutoring takes place in the home setting, opportunities are provided which identify and resolve problems of communication between parent and child. Often these problems arise from the conflicts created by the lack of understanding between the majority society and the ethnic community.

Many thousands of miles away, in a refugee camp in the Philippines, Southeast Asian teenagers, ages 13-16, are enrolled in Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS). This program is designed to replicate, as much as possible, the learning environment of a U.S. public secondary school. The goals of the program are a) to prepare adolescents for entry into the schools in the U.S.; b) to create an environment where several language and cultures are represented in a classroom in which a number of subjects are taught in English, and c) to involve parents in the school process through orientation meetings, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences (when applicable).

Expectations on the part of each group involved in the literacy process are complex and often not easily understood. Schools expect parents to volunteer and be cooperative but remain silent when it comes to matters of policy. Parents, when drawn into the school process expect to have more influence on the education of the children. Students expect to be provided with clear guidelines. Added to this picture are the problems created by the adjustment and acculturation process of immigrants and refugees. The two models presented are a sign of hope where inter- and cross-cultural communication can take place.

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Involving LEP Parents

The changes in the composition of newcomers to the U.S. has placed an increased burden on the school and service-providing agencies. Programs, albeit too few, have sprung up to meet the needs of groups of people who do not have the resources to cope in a technological, fast-moving society. In addition some areas are impacted with the presence of undocumented aliens. The needs of this latter group are just as urgent, if not more so. They have virtually no way of accessing services, and often the schools have to respond to their needs through their children who somehow make it into the classroom.

In addition to the schools, there are organizations which serve these populations. Often they are set up to serve one ethnic group, but not necessarily. They provide a place where the schools can send the children and their parents to get assistance. Their role has become increasingly one of a broker, where they play a vital role in educating the schools about the needs of their communities, and encouraging the parents to participate in the schooling process of their children.

The immediate concern of these service groups, however, is to provide for emergencies such as food, housing and jobs. The problems of adjustment are severe for their "clients" and they also often have to get involved in seeing to it that people who are under a lot of stress are counseled. This is particularly important for families with school children.

The long-term goal of these groups and programs associated with the schools is to provide channels of communication so the environment for learning can be maximized. It has become mandatory for individuals who serve as community liaisons to devise as many possible ways to involve LEP parents in the schooling process. For it is only as they become partners with the teachers that literacy in its fullest meaning will take place.

The presentations in this session oesribed the practical ways in which school and community facilitators try to get LEP parents involved in the schools. There was agreement that any method which worked was worth trying again. Visits to the home, TV announcements, notices, telephone calls, meetings that take place at the same time in the same place, and recognition of the parents' contributions were all cited as ways which appear to work.

The necessity to be aware of the perceptions of the parents regarding the school system and the schooling process was a recurring theme. Most LEP parents consider the teachers and administrators as the professionals. They believe they have little to add to the education process of their children. On the other hand, they often

regard the schools as hostile agents who are encouraging their children to deny their cultural heritage. The situation then becomes a tug of war with the school representing the new and dominant culture and the family embodying the old.

Parents can be involved in the literacy process in a number of ways even though they may not have received a formal education, and their English is limited. They can be volunteers in the classrom, act as translators, provide cultural resources and so forth. The more English-proficient can help with the assessment of students, translation of school communications, selection of instructional material, and planning programs. The main goal is to find ways to get them involved.

All the presentors stressed the fact that parents' non-involvement in the schools and their children's education is not necessarily due to a lack of interest. Situations which contribute to a lack of involvement should be taken seriously and addressed. Such conditions as being dependent on public transportation, which makes evening meetings difficult to attend. Or working two jobs which does not allow time for such things as school activities. The lack of knowledge about the nature of meetings where the parents and the schools can meet keeps the parents away And lack of English proficiency--all these can contribute to parents staying away from getting involved and actively participating in the literacy process of their children.

In planning and implementing parent involvement activities, the following suggestions were made:

Utilizing bilingual aides as effective links and motivational forces to parent involvement

Using the teacher's community outreach activities as an effective recruitment process of parents for school programs

Sending school communications in a language the parents can understand, whenever feasible

Planning orientation, and discussion sessions at frequent intervals

Developing of a formalized plan for parent involvement

Creating an advisory council where that approach seems appropriate

Offering training programs, meetings, and workshops for parents to develop their leadership skills to help them function more effectively

Providing literacy courses for illiterate or preliterate parents

Encouraging school staff to participate in community events

Organizing frequent school visits so the parents become familiar with the schools environment

Demanding a commitment to the program from the school staff and administrators

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Title VII Projects of Academic Excellence: Efforts to Promote Parent Involvement and Literacy

Involving parents in the literacy and educational process of their children has resulted in the development of a number of models which were the subject of this session. Primary consideration in these models of academic excellence is that they were set up as community-based activities, and the funding was for a limited time. Thus their life-span, if they are to continue, has had to come from support from the community and they have to be integrated into the ongoing activities of the schools.

The ***Parents as Tutors (PAT)*** project in Brownsville [Texas] Independent School District serves 150 parents of LEP students at 13 campuses from Kindergarten through the the second grade. The program was begun in the 1984-85 school year, and has three major goals: 1) Increased parental involvement; 2) increased self-concept, and 3) increased academic achievement on the part of the students.

The training for parents in the first year involved building their knowledge base in the following areas: Parental involvement; children's growth and development; motivation; self-concept; language develoment, curriculum in state Transitional Bilingual Education Programs, and home learning centers. Training also focused on the development of the parents' tutoring skills.

The tutoring in the first year was in the form of providing parents with activities that were directly related to their children's skill level and proficiency level in English and Spanish. The activities focused specifically on language arts and math.

In the second year, meetings were held every two weeks with parents at the cluster sites. Child care and transportation were provided, based on need. Sessions were alternated to give parents information on topics they chose as most closely related to their needs and interests.

In the alternating sessions, parents were involved and developing activities created by staff to focus on language arts and math that were correlated to the district curriculum and the state essential elements. Parents made the materials they were going to use with their children.

The monitoring of this project was done through the parents completing their contracts every week, and providing a log of tutoring activities.

One result of the effectiveness of this program has been that many of the parents have now enrolled in ESL programs and some have gotten their GED since becoming involved in the program.

In the third year of the project, the focus will continue to be on training the parents, but it will now expand to work with teachers and administrators to carry on the project at their schools after funding is no longer available.

Project Welcome is a program serving the needs of parents of LEP students in three elementary schools in the Glendale [California] Unified School District.

The project evolved from a response to a dramatic increase of LEP students in the schools over a three-year period. The curriculum which

was developed to draw the parents into the schooling process consists of ESL-Literacy, Health and Nutrition, and Self-Esteem-Parenting.

A chief element of the project included an intensive recruiting campaign. Class sessions were offered in the mornings and the evenings. It was discovered that morning classes were preferred by homemakers with small children and evening classes were generally preferred by the fathers. Also child care is a necessity which has led to the unforeseen advantage of giving small children and opportunity to play together, learn English songs and games and have a mini pre-school experience.

English classes are taught by a trained ESL teacher and aide. Every attempt is made to use non-stressful teaching methods.

The second component, Health and Nutrition, was conducted by teachers in the languages of the parents. Classes consisted of lectures on proper nutrition, food preparation demonstration, recipes and shopping hints.

The health unit included classes led by students in the cosmetology programs where parents were given haircuts and facials, interspersed with didactic presentations.

The component on Self-Esteem-Parenting presented sessions on effective discipline in the home, improving communication between parents, children and the school, resolving home-conflicts, and comparing native cultures with American society, and giving the parents resources available in the community which would treat more serious problems.

The plans for the future include a special literacy program, utilizing the tutoring talents of parent participants who attended a workshop where they learned how to effectively teach reading and writing to other parents who have not had the opporutnity to attend school in their native country.

Project Welcome has been successful in its first year of implementation.

Parents Assisting in Learning (PAL) in Broward County, Florida, evolved from two previous model projects in the area of parent training. This project is a cooperative effort between Florida International University and the School Board of Broward County. The major thrust of the program is to involve Hispanic parents whose children have demonstrated difficulty in Florida's State Assessment Test, or who are classified as LEP.

The objectives of the program are:

to increase parents' knowledge of the educational system in the U.S., and how this relates to a largely foreign bureaucratic system;

to assist parents in becoming actively involved in factors which affect their children's education thus begining a process of changing attitudes towards the school;

to provide parents with concrete methods and bilingual materials which they may use at home with their children;

to train parents in home-based academic tutoring of their children in the three areas of basic skills covered in the State Assessment Test (Mathematics, Reading, and Writing);

to expand the knowledge of parenting skills and patterns of family interaction.

The program includes two cycles of activities: Parent-Child Training Sessions, and Follow-Up Activities. The first set of activities is primarily a series of lectures given during the evening hours. Topics addressed are, the importance of parental involvement in schools; American educational philosophy; parenting skills; tutoring skills in math, reading, and writing; the importance of state and national tests such as the Florida State Assessment Test, and human interaction.

The lectures are supplemented by a series of 10 manuals which was distributed free of charge to the parents. These include specific activites and skills required to facilitate home-based tutoring with their children.

The success of this project is determined by the number of students in the program who are promoted to the next grade level, and where they are able to master all of the objectives of the State Assessment Test. Parental participation is measured through attendance, parent-teacher conferences, PTA/PTO meetings, number of hours spent tutoring, involvement in Parent Advisory Committees, and other related school activities. In addition, parents are pre- and post-tested on specific pre-determined criteria of material covered in the training cycle.

Strategies which were developed for promoting parental involvement are an important component of the program.

1. Hispanic parents can be tapped to be included in the educational process of their children. Efforts to dispel fear, frustration and alienation will result in their participation.

2. Parents must believe that what they are doing is meaningful and contributes to the their child's development.

3. Parents are more cooperative if they receive practical information and learn skills that are applicable at home.

4. If parents are predominantly Spanish speaking, training sessions should be conducted in Spanish. Unnecessary translation is distracting.

5. Tutorial and child care should be a component of the training sessions.

6. Parenting skills should be given careful attention since the context of parenting in another culture requires different tasks which may be quite difficult to perform.

7. Novel techniques should be used in order to keep up interest.

8. Weekly written notices which serve as reminders should be send out. Weekly telephone calls are even more effective in establishing linkage and rapport between the staff and parents in the program.

The Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts is in its third year of a successful parent

training model which has drawn the parents into the educational development of their children.

The project is when the school noticed that the parents of their LEP students, although pleased with the education that their children were receiving, were uninvolved. Programs which were designed to allow the parents to make meaningful contributions to their children's education. This parental involvement began on a one-to-one and small group basis. Time and flexibility were also part of the program, and through raising their consciousness about the educational, social and political system in the U.S., the staff of the program were able to motivate participants to address their own needs regarding careers.

Findings proved that the program had achieved more than it had aspired to. Parents demonstrated significant improvement in all skills on the training list according to a pre-post measurement instrument. They were thus able to state the purpose of the school,; summarize the role of the Parent Advisory Council; list school regulation;, explain and follow a complicated admissions process; decribe the structure of school administration; explain the role of the school committee; describe Special Education services; summarize the rights and requirements of the Bilingual Law; describe strategies for addressing teenage problems; explain how to motivate students and keep them in school, and explain the benefits of vocational education.

Parents also reported that they found the training program motivating and showed interest in continuing to have a role in the program.

Parents also began to initiate contact with the school. The phone calls increased considerably; there was a remarkable decrease in student absences, and the dropout rate also decreased markedly.

Parents incorporated to form a non-profit organization called PUEDA and they also attended local, state and national bilingual conferences to share their successes and expand their understanding of bilingual education.

The funding for this program ended, but plans are to continue its activities through local support. Plans are to begin including a component for Southeast Asian parents whose children are now beginning to attend Greater Lowell Regional Vocational High School in significant numbers.

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